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Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

35TH YEAR

APRIL 10, 1978

NUTRITION DAY CAMPS

If you can't cook, you don't eat--that's the theme of the Nutrition Day Camp created with the idea that "getting kids involved with the entire process of cooking and learning about food is fun," according to Susan Smith, extension agent with the Colorado State University Extension office in Denver.

The camp program is under the auspices of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education program, which is designed to train para-professionals from lower-income groups to teach nutritional awareness in their own neighborhoods. Nutrition day camps were organized to teach children the importance of good health through learning nutrition by practicing it. All the youngsters help prepare food as part of the day camp activities in the parks near their homes.

This summer, hundreds of youngsters in the Denver area will, for the third successive year, have the opportunity to attend an eight-week program to learn about preparing food outdoors. Highlight of last year's day camp activities for the 9-to-11-year-olds was making their own small solar dehydrator for drying fruits and vegetables. The kids liked cutting up the boxes, following the pattern and constructing their own simplified dehydrators.

The ancient art of preserving food by drying intrigued the youngsters. Drying pineapple slices dipped into lemon juice proved to be fun---although a messy job---according to one of their fathers. Excess fruits or vegetables from their home gardens could be dried and used for instant soups and snacks the next winter, the children learned.

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USDA GRADE STANDARDS

Grade standards for food were first established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1917, with potatoes the first to be graded. Standards for other foods followed rapidly, and by 1928 standards had been adopted for many other food products.

The grading program was started to aid in the marketing of farm products by identifying degrees of quality in various foods, thus providing a means of measuring value and establishing prices in wholesale trading. This enabled retailers to buy the quality of food their customers wanted.

Before official U.S. grade standards were established, shoppers had to rely on numerous and confusing state and local standards and trade terms.

Grading is essentially a voluntary program, provided by USDA for a fee.

Grade standards have been established for fresh fruits and vegetables; nuts; most dairy products; rice, dry beans, peas and related products; eggs; poultry; beef, veal and calf, and lamb and mutton carcasses; canned, frozen and dried fruits and vegetables and related products such as preserves.

U.S. grade standards are available for various grains, but not for grain food products such as flour or cereals.

One example of standards are the quality and size standards set for eggs. Standards for quality relate to the appearance of the egg and its usefulness in various methods of cooking. Standards for size are based on the weight of a dozen eggs, with a three-ounce difference between sizes.

USDA 952-78

YOU CAN DO IT YOURSELF

Cottage cheese can easily be made at home from skim milk or reconstituted instant nonfat dry milk, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture home economists. This freshly-made cheese has a mild acid flavor and a smooth texture, unlike commercial types, according to do-it-yourselfers.

There are two major types of cottage cheese.....small-curd, high-acid cheese made without rennet and large-curd, low-acid cheese made with rennet. Rennet speeds curdling and keeps the curd from breaking up easily. Adding rennet shortens the cheese-making process, results in a less-acid and larger-curd cheese, and reduces the amount of curd poured off.

Cottage cheese made either with or without rennet can be creamed to increase its smoothness and improve its flavor and texture. Creaming cottage cheese also adds calories. Cottage cheese contains about 20 percent milk solids, and many of the same nutrients found in fresh milk.

NUTRITION DAY CAMPS (CON'T)

They were told that it takes from one to three days to dry fruits and vegetables, depending on the thickness of the slices and the degree of heat in their solar dryers.

Ms. Smith, who attended a science workshop recently on solar energy, has many new ideas for incorporating projects into camp activities during the coming session. This unique camp has created interest from other state leaders who want to adopt this plan to encourage nutrition awareness in this age group.

ABOUT

YOU

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ME

Margaret "Cissy" Drowne, president of the New Hampshire Press Women, has returned to the Derry (N.H.) News as Suburban Editor after her six-month stint at free-lancing...The Lawrence (Mass.) Eagle Tribune

plans to enlarge its Sunday tabloid paper to full size in October.....Gail Tyler, former feature writer, now edits "Today's Living" for the Newton (N.J.) Herald...The Los Angeles Times (Calif.) will open a San Diego office this month, headed by Nancy Ray, formerly with the San Diego Evening Union. Laurie Bucklund, San Diego Evening Union, will also switch to the L.A. Times office there.. Cynthia Roberts from Cuyahoga county bureau to the Accent section of the Elyria (Ohio) Chronicle Telegram..... Sophie Leavitt, who wrote "Penny Pincher's Cook Book," has another one going to press for thrifty family cooks..... International Food Technologists have set their 38th annual meeting and Food Expo in Dallas, June 4-7. Items under discussion include toxic substances associated with edible plant tissues, nutrition, diet and disease, solar energy in food processing...Joan Peter, Extension in New Hampshire, went to work for the World Health Organization in Jamaica April 1.

FOOD CLIPS

Store butter in its original wrapper or container and it will not pick up flavors from other foods.

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Half and half may be made at home by mixing milk and cream. Commercial half and half is made by homogenizing a mixture of milk and cream but it must contain between 10.5 and 18 percent milkfat.